"BEHOLD, A VIRGIN SHALL CONCEIVE…"

Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God."—Luke 1:34-35 (NASB)

Valley Grace Brethren Church of Armagh, Pennsylvania

Sunday, December 5th, AD 2021

The LORD'S Day

The Fifth Day of December, *in the Year of our Lord* 2021

Welcome to the worship services of Valley Grace Brethren Church!

Sunday School—9:30 AM.

In our studies in "**God & Government**," we examine the doctrinal shortcomings and flawed assumptions that underlie the spiritually impotent and radically unbiblical "**Social Gospel"** movement.

Morning Worship—10:30 AM.

Call to Worship:* *"What Child is This"* (#126; v. 1)

Invocation.*

Hymn: *"O Come, All Ye Faithful* (#130; vv. 1, 3, & 4).

Prayer for Tithes & Offerings.

Scripture Reading: Matthew 1:18-25.

Prayer, Praises, & Testimony.

Hymn: *"Little Baby Jesus* (#129).

Announcemnts.

Hymn: *"Angels from the Realms of Glory"* (#124).

Dismissal of Youth for Children's Church.

Greeting One Another.

Message: *"BEHOLD, A VIRGIN SHALL CONCEIVE..."*

Closing Hymn:* *"O Little Town of Bethlehem* (#128)."

Benediction.*

*The Congregation will please arise, if able.

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Downloadable audio mp3 messages at archive.org (@reesetpje)
Also check out our YouTube Channel (search *"Terry Reese"*)!
Camp Mantowagan website: *https://www.campmantowagan.com*

Wednesday Prayer & Bible Study—4:00 PM.

Our studies in Daniel ch. 4 this week focuses upon the issue of "signs & wonders"—a matter of grave relevence in the contemporary church.

Today's Verses for Reflection:

"Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel."—Isaiah 7:14 (NASB)

Week of Nov. 28-Dec. 4, 2021

Sunday School—2; Morning Worship—14
Midweek Prayer & Bible Study—No Service.
Church Offering: $777.00

Christmas Gift Boxes

We are collecting for four Boxes this year. Non-perishable food items or cash donations (which will go towards the purchase of a gift card) will be accepted. Please forward your cash donations unto Don or Francis Beach. Boxes will be distributed on 12/22/21.

A SPECIAL THANKS UNTO C.E.F

We extend our special thanks unto Cathy Sloan and her team of selfless volunteers at the Armstrong-Indiana-Westmoreland chapter of the Child Evangelism Fellowship (C.E.F.) for their willingness to come to our church for our Saturday Christmas Party and minister unto children, offering their time, talents, and resources at their own expense. If you would be interested in making a donation to C.E.F., please forward your contributions to the following address:

Child Evangelism Fellowship, P.O. Box 403, Indiana , PA, 15701

Christmas Hymn Stories:
"O Little Town of Bethlehem."

By Pastor Terry L. Reese, 12/05/2021

"As for you, Bethlehem of Ephrathah, even though you remain least among the clans of Judah, nevertheless, the One who rules in Israel for Me will emerge from you. His existence has been from antiquity, even from eternity." — Micah 5:2 (ISV)

Lyrics: Phillips Brooks (1835-1893); Music: Lewis Redner (1831–1908)

"O Little Town of Bethlehem" is an excellent example of a song that was originally composed specifically as a *children's hymn*, but which went on to capture the hearts of all ages.

The lyricist was the Rev. Phillips Brooks, an Episcopalian pastor serving the Holy Trinity Church of Philadelphia, who composed this hymn for a children's Sunday School program in 1868. Lucy Neeley Adams sketches Pastor Brooks in the following terms:

> *This giant of a man, who stood 6-feet 8 inches, also had a big heart that endeared him to old and young alike. There were toys in his office for the many children who visited him. It was a familiar sight to see the beloved bishop sitting on the floor playing a game with a group of children. He never married but other people's children became like a family to him. When he died unexpectedly in 1893, at the age of 58, everyone was overwhelmed with grief. It was a child who put his death in a beautiful light. When told by her mother that Bishop Brooks had gone to heaven, she simply said, "Oh Mama, how happy the angels will be."*

Brooks had been inspired by a pilgrimage he had made to Bethlehem in 1865, when he travelled on Christmas Eve by horseback from Jerusalem to Bethlehem and then participated in a worship service at the traditional site of our Lord's nativity.

Struggling to find just the right tune to match Brooks' poetry, the church organist, Lewis Redner, finally composed the music following an anxious night of tossing-and-turning just before the service, when the melody suddenly & unexpectedly came to him. "*I think it was a gift from heaven*," he told Brooks. Redner would later recall *"Neither Mr. Brooks nor I ever thought the carol or the music to it would live beyond that Christmas of 1868."* Happily, they were both entirely WRONG!